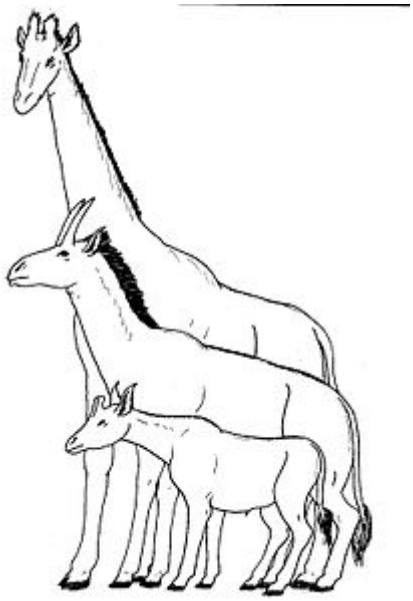
Samotherium

Samotherium ("beast of Samos") is an extinct genus of Giraffidae from the Miocene and Pliocene of Eurasia and Africa. *Samotherium* had two ossicones on its head, and long legs. The ossicones usually pointed upward, and were curved backwards, with males having larger, more curved ossicones, though in the Chinese species, *S. sinense*, the straight ossicones point laterally, not upwards. The genus is closely related to *Shansitherium*. Fossil evidence suggests that *Samotherium* had a rounded muzzle, which would suggest a grazing lifestyle and a habitat composed of grassland.[1]

According to biologist Richard Ellis the skull of a *Samotherium* is portrayed on an ancient Greek vase as a monster that Heracles is fighting.[2]

Description



Samotherium major (middle) in comparison with the okapi (below) and giraffe. The anatomy of *Samotherium* appears to have shown a transition to a giraffe-like neck.

A 2015 study found that *Samotherium* had a neck intermediate in length between the giraffe and the okapi, judging from examination of specimens of *S. major* from Greece.[3]

Samotherium
Temporal range: Miocene to Pliocene
Samotherium skull
Scientific classification
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Giraffidae
Genus: †*Samotherium*
Species
▪ *S. africanum* Churcher, 1970 ▪ *S. boissieri* Forsyth-Major, 1889 (type) ▪ *S. major* Bohlin, 1926 ▪ *S. neumayri* Rodler and Weithofer, 1890 ▪ *S. sinense* Bohlin, 1926

References

1. Walker, Cyril; Ward, David (2002). *Fossils* (2nd American ed.). Dorling Kindersley. p. 280. ISBN 0-7894-8984-8.
2. Ellis, Richard (2004). *No Turning Back: The Life and Death of Animal Species* (https://archive.org/details/noturningbacklif00elli). New York: Harper Perennial. pp. 6 (https://archive.org/details/noturningbacklif00elli/page/6). ISBN 0-06-055804-0.
3. Danowitz, Melinda; Domalski, Rebecca; Solounias, Nikos (1 November 2015). "The cervical anatomy of Samotherium, an intermediate-necked giraffid" (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4680625). *Open Science*. The Royal Society. **2** (11): 150521. doi:10.1098/rsos.150521 (https://doi.org/10.1098%2Frsos.150521). PMC 4680625 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4680625). PMID 26716010 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26716010).

S. major and *S. boissieri*

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